

REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)

ANNUAL REPORT 2011

St Albans City and District Council has been given powers under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 to conduct authorised directed surveillances (DI) and use of human intelligence sources (CHIS) in certain circumstances in connection with the conduct of criminal investigations. All surveillances require authorisation by a senior Council officer and the exercise of the powers is subject to review. The Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) oversees the exercise by Councils of their surveillance powers.

In April 2011 the Council was inspected by a Surveillance Inspector on behalf of the Chief Surveillance Commissioner to review the management of the Council's use of RIPA since the previous inspection in 2008.

The Inspector's report noted that the Council had implemented the recommendations contained in the 2008 report. The Chief Surveillance Commissioner observed that although the Council make infrequent use of their covert powers its officers are plainly keen to discharge their RIPA responsibilities appropriately. The Inspector found that the applications and authorisations are generally of a high standard and when the use of the covert activity was proposed it was both proportionate and necessary. The single recommendation was that refresher training for authorising officers should particularly focus on cancellation of authorisations in the central record.

The Council accepted the recommendation and refresher training by an experienced external trainer was held on 1 December 2011. Twenty delegates attended including Authorising officers and investigators from different Council departments.

During 2011 two directed surveillance authorisations were issued as follows:

16.5.2011 - Surveillance in order to obtain evidence of unlawful disposal of controlled waste and assorted waste material (fly tipping).

12.7.2011 – Surveillance for the purpose of obtaining evidence of unlawful disposal of controlled waste and assorted waste material (fly tipping).

The Council's Head of Legal, Democratic and Regulatory Services provided statistical returns to the Surveillance Commissioner.

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